

THE PROPOSED CARLTON CLUB-HOUSE COMPETITION.

SIR,—The recent proceedings of the Carlton Club appear to call for some comment on the part of the profession, and I have drawn up a statement from documents in as calm a manner as possible, feeling that a bare announcement of facts is often more eloquent than a long treatise. I think the insertion of it in *THE BUILDER* may do good, and call attention to the necessity of some protective measures being taken by architects, if they do not wish to be kicked about like footballs at the caprice of every committee, whether composed of tradespeople or of the high and mighty of the land, in whom, alike, when a favourite is to be served, all proper feeling seems to be lost; and therefore architects should set their faces against the present mode of proceeding adopted by committees, whereby competitions are mere farces—dimay blinds to screen some intended favouritism.

I have stated nothing which cannot be substantiated; and my own observations are, I hope, only such as one jealous of the reputation of his profession would be expected to make.

It has been just decided, by a ballot of the whole club, that Messrs. Basevi and Sydney Smirke are to be the architects to carry out the proposed alterations. A slight sketch of the proceedings of the club in the years 1844 and 1845, relative to the competition, may not be uninteresting to the profession, and would appear to call for some decided steps to be taken, with a view to a thorough understanding in future of the real position which architects should occupy when required to enter into competition.

In consequence of the Carlton Club having resolved to purchase the two adjoining houses in Pall-Mall, with a view to enlarge the building, it was decided that a limited number (14) of eminent architects should be invited to send in plans for the elevation and internal arrangements of the necessary alterations and additions; the plan which should be most approved to receive a premium of 500*l.* "in case it should not be adopted by the club;" and that which should be considered the second best a premium of 100*l.* "in case the first should be adopted."

Eight only of the architects who were invited to compete sent in plans, varying in estimated expense from 22,000*l.* to 50,000*l.* The first premium was adjudged, by ballot, to Mr. Salvin, for a plan in the Elizabethan style, of which the estimated cost was 31,000*l.*; and the second premium was adjudged, in the same way, to Mr. Hopper, who, for his elevation, had copied that of Inigo Jones's Banqueting House at Whitehall, and whose estimate was 22,000*l.*

In their report upon the various plans that had been sent in, the special committee (consisting of the Marquis of Salisbury, Mr. Henry Hope, and Mr. Gaily Knight) had observed, with regard to Mr. Salvin's, that "while of its beauty there could be but one opinion, they doubted whether such a design was well adapted for a London atmosphere, or for the position it was to occupy;" and further, that "they considered it inadmissible, from the circumstance that the entrance at the north-west corner was reasonably objected to by the next-door neighbour."

Respecting Mr. Hopper's plan, they had reported that "the north front had considerable merit; that it offered a succession of good morning and writing rooms to the north, east, and south; with a large coffee-room extending from Pall-Mall to Carlton-gardens, and having a cupola and central skylight which would render the room very light, capable of a variety of useful arrangements, and give it a handsome appearance;" &c.

The instructions were issued to architects on the 19th of March, 1844, and the plans were sent in by the 1st of May; and certainly up to that time no such intimation had been given as that which follows, which appears on the 18th of June, when it was for the first time declared to the architects to whom had been awarded the two premiums, "that the club was not to be considered bound to adopt either of the successful plans, and that the drawings, &c., to which the premiums might be awarded should become unconditionally the property of the club." And in the report, dated

10th May, 1845, it is stated that "the committee desire to observe that the club, having acquired the property of these two plans, are entitled, if they should think fit, to make any use of them, without employing either Mr. Salvin or Mr. Hopper as their architect, which is perfectly understood by these gentlemen." The words in italics constitute an extraordinary assertion, and one not borne out in the instructions or correspondence up to the time that the plans were sent in; and surely the interpretation, according to the rules of common sense and common justice, of the conditions annexed to the two premiums could only admit of one meaning, viz., that Mr. Salvin was to receive 200*l.* for his plan (the first), if not adopted; but that if the first was adopted, Mr. Hopper was to receive 100*l.* for his plan (the second); but here, whatever they may have intended further to stipulate, the committee stop short; but the argument goes on, and therefore it is impossible, if words are to have any meaning at all, to escape from the conclusion that, as Mr. Salvin's plan was not adopted, Mr. Hopper ought (instead of being paid the 100*l.*) to have been employed. Instead of so doing the club have now decided the choice of the architect by a ballot, each member being at liberty to place in the ballot-box the name of the architect he would prefer.

The following is the result of the ballot:—Messrs. Roberts, Nelson, Beasley, and Blane had one vote each; Mr. P. Hardwick, two votes; Mr. Railton, four votes; Mr. Burns, five votes; Mr. Cockrell, six votes; Mr. Taylor, nine votes; Mr. Hopper, fifty-seven votes; Mr. Salvin, eighty-nine votes; Mr. Barry, 210 votes; Messrs. Basevi and Sydney Smirke, 220 votes;—about half only of the members of the club voting on the occasion. It must be observed that Mr. Barry had declined to enter in the competition for plans in 1844, and that Messrs. Basevi and S. Smirke were among the unsuccessful candidates on that occasion.

The point to which the attention of the profession should be called is, to ascertain whether certain rules of conduct should be laid down by which competitions (if such things must be) should be guided,—a code of honour formed which should be binding on professional men as gentlemen, so that fair and honourable contests should take the place of gladiatorial combats; that those who have toiled to win the prize should not have the wreath snatched from them in the moment of victory, and find, after all their exertions, nothing left for their consolation but the poet's line,—

"The reward is in the race we run, not in the prize."

The history of the Carlton Club competition is only one more addition to the list of cases of the kind which have already been noticed in *THE BUILDER*, in which interest is made to ride in the ascendant, since it is notorious that a most active canvass was set on foot for the architect of the Reform Club and those of the Conservative Club, between whom in fact it was understood the race was to be run, and which will account for some of our most eminent men having so few votes.

Something must be done to put the competition for a high and honourable prize upon a different footing to a contest for the post of beadle or sexton, with the adherents of the parties calling out, "Vote for Wiggs," "Vote for Snooks." If, however, architects are content to be placed on this footing they must not feel surprised at any conduct which may be pursued, and they must be prepared to expect that committees will advertise for plans, and will receive the collected talent of competitors, not one of whom is to have a chance of ultimate success against some favoured party. The remedy is in the power of the profession, if proper steps are taken to secure that treatment which is due to it from the high ground which it ought to hold in public estimation.

SERIO MELLORA.

JEFFREY'S MARINE GUT.—A report of a French commission, charged to make experiments on the marine glue, at the port of Foulon, has just been published, and asserts the superiority of this material for caulking vessels, its power of preserving wood from the punctures of marine insects, and their opinions that trials on a large scale ought to be made forthwith.

PRICE OF BUILDING MATERIALS IN BRECON.

SIR,—I beg leave to forward you the prices of building materials, &c., in this neighbourhood:—

TIMBER:—	4.	s.	d.	
Mrmel.....	0	2	6	per cube foot.
Yellow Pine	0	1	10	ditto
Red, ditto	0	2	3	ditto
African Oak.....	0	3	0	ditto
Engish, ditto, 3s. to ..	0	3	6	large s-ant.
Ditto, 2s. to ..	0	3	0	small ditto.
Larch Poles.....	0	1	0	per cube foot.
Laths, 3s. to ..	0	3	6	per hundred.

SLATES:—	4.	s.	d.	
Queen's (30 by 16) ..	4	0	0	per ton of 400.
Princess (24 by 14) ..	10	10	0	per thousand.
Duchess (24 by 12) ..	9	5	0	ditto
Marchioness (22 by 11) 6	10	0	0	ditto
Countess (20 by 10) ..	6	0	0	ditto

BRICKS:—	3.	s.	d.	
Bridgewater	3	0	0	ditto
Pending (Brecon) ..	2	0	0	ditto
Fire.....	6	0	0	ditto

BUILDING STONE, 5s. to ..	0	6	0	per load, (about 3 tons.
Ashlar—Llanguni-der stone }	0	0	9	per foot cube.

(Good stone for building purposes.)

The same in steps, cills, plinths, &c. 1s.	0	1	2	per foot cube.
Crickhowell.....	0	1	2	per foot cube.
Bath stone	0	2	6	ditto
(The new county hall is cased with it.)				
Stone tiles	0	4	0	per hundred.
Lime	0	1	5	per barrel of (two bushels; weight 2½ cwt.
Cement	0	17	0	per cask; wt. from 3½ to 3½ cwt. (from Pontypool).

MARBLE:—	0	7	0	per cube foot.
Welsh Porphyry	0	7	0	per cube foot.
Black 12s. to ..	0	14	0	ditto
Italian	1	5	0	ditto

IRONWORK:—	0	0	1½	per lb.
Castings, small	0	0	1½	per lb.
Ditto, large 10s. to ..	0	12	0	per cwt. fitted up.
Wrought	0	0	3	per lb.

GLASS:—	0	1	0	per square foot.
Common.....	0	1	0	per square foot.
Crown.....	0	1	4	ditto
Plate	0	3	6	ditto

LEAD:—					
Sheet Lead, 1½ ds. to	1	7	6	per cwt.	
Cast Lead	1	6	0	ditto	
Copper					
Zinc, 10d. per lb., or	0	0	6	per foot.	
Paint	0	0	7	{ per lb. on the average.	

Artisans, 3s. to 5s. 6d. per day of 10 working hours.				
Labourers, 1s. 10d. to 2s.	10	0	0	ditto
Horse and cart, 4s. to 5s.	4	0	0	ditto
MASONRY.—Walling is executed with mortar at 1s. 3d. to 1s. 8d. per perch (a perch is 7 yds. by 2 ft. thick and 1 ft. high). Dry-walling, 9d. to 10d. per perch. If scaffolding is required, from 2s. to 2s. 6d. per perch.				

The above are the prices usually paid in this town. I am, Sir, &c.

Brecon, May 23, 1845. B. BAYLIS.

* * We are much obliged to Mr. Baylis, and hope we may be furnished with similar information from other parts of the country.

GUNPOWDER AS AN AGENT.—The Whiting Shoal, in Lough Rea, which extends nearly half a mile in the centre of the river, and has long impeded the navigation, was lessened last week by means of gunpowder. A hole was bored some distance in the shoal, in which was deposited a tin case containing 45 lbs. of gunpowder, and it was fired by a galvanic battery from one of the Government lighters, under the command of the harbour-master. The effect is described as being very singular. A large body of water was thrown up in a dome-like form, and the shock was plainly felt on both sides of the river. After the operation it was found that some forty feet of the shoal was displaced. The usual dredging machines had previously failed. In the same week the Ewart Rock, so long a dangerous impediment to vessels navigating the Solway Frith, was blown to pieces with gunpowder by direction of the trustees of Maryport Harbour. The accomplishment of this object forms one of the many suggestions by Captain Denham, for facilitating the approach to and otherwise improving the harbour of Maryport, and which are being carried out under the superintendence of Mr. Abraham Middleton, civil-engineer.